

Message Text

SECRET

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11

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00

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RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 ACDA-19

OMB-01 DRC-01 /162 W

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R 120750Z JAN 74

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4995

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T CAIRO 181

FROM HOUGHTON

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ED IS UR US

SUBJECT: REMARKS BY TASS OFFICIAL ON SAM-7'S IN EUROPE,
WEAPONS DELIVERIES TO EGYPT, AND SOVIET/
EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

1. IN JANUARY 11 CONVERSATION WITH USINTOFF, DEPUTY TASS
DIRECTOR YEDRASHNIKOV PRESSED VERY HARD FOR REASONS AND
BACKGROUND TO SECRETARY'S VISIT TO ME. HE WAS PARTICULARLY
INTERESTED TO KNOW IF ISRAELIS HAD MODIFIED THEIR POSITION
ON FIRST STAGE OF DISENGAGEMENT SO THAT THEY NO LONGER
INSISTED ON THINNING OUT OF EGYPTIAN FORCES TO EAST OF CANAL.
YEDRASHNIKOV STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ISRAELIS HAD IN
FACT SOFTENED ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE, BUT HE WANTED
CONFIRMATION. (RE RECEIVED NO SATISFACTIN.)

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2. SAM 7'S IN EUROPE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION POSED BY

USINTOFF IN MEETING SEVERAL WEEKS AGO AND REPEATED JAN 11, YEDRASHNIKOV SAID SOVIETS HAD INFORMATION THAT A NUMBER OF SAM 7'S WERE DELIVERED BY EGYPTIANS TO LIBYANS LAST SUMMER, PROBABLY IN JUNE. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS PART OF AN ARRANGEMENT CONCLUDED BETWEEN GOE AND GOL IN EARLY 1973 WHEREBY EGYPTIANS AGREED TO PROVIDE LIBYANS WITH AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR STATIONING OF LIBYAN MIRAGES IN EGYPT. YEDRASHNIKOV SAID THAT SOVIETS UNDERSTOOD TOTAL NUMBER OF SAM 7'S DELIVERED TO LIBYANS WAS LESS THAN 10, AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THOSE SEIZED IN HANDS OF PALESTINAIANS AT ROME LAST AUGUST PROBABLY WERE FROM THIS GROUP. HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS NO WAY SOVIETS COULD CONTROL USE OF THOSE SA 7'S ALREADY DELIVERED.

3. DURING DISCUSSION YEDRASHNIKOV INTERJECTED THAT, "SPEAKING OF MIG 23'S", SOVIETS HAD AGREED DURING VISIT TO EGYPT BY FIELD MARSHALL GRECHKO (POSSIBLY IN 1972 - YEDRASHNIKOV DID NOT SPECIFY DATE) TO PROVIDE EGYPT WITH ADVANCED MODEL FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. AT THAT TIME NO EGYPTIANS WERE TO FLY SUCH AIRCRAFT AND SOVIETS HAD UNDERTAKEN TO TRAIN A NUMBER OF EGYPTIAN PILOTS INTO MIG 23'S. APPROXIMATELY ONE SQUADRON OF THESE AIRCRAFT WERE TO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE BY END OF 1973. YEDRASHNIKOV STATED CAREFULLY THAT THESE AIRCRAFT HAD NOT BEEN DELIVERED, AND THAT IS WAS HIS "PERSONAL VIEW" THAT HIGH-LEVEL DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN IN MOSCOW TO WITHHOLD SUCH DELIVERIES. HE ADDED THAT A MUTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE US AND USSR MIGHT HAVE PROMPTED THIS DECISION. (COMMENT: SUBJECT OF MIG 23'S HAD NOT BEEN RAISED AND WAS QUITE UNRELATED TO THE DISCUSSION AT THE TIME. IT APPEARED THAT YEDRASHNIKOV HAD CHOSEN A MOMENT TO COMMUNICATE MESSAGE THAT SOVIETS WERE EXERCISING RESTRAINT IN THEIR ARMS DELIVERIES TO EGYPT.)

4. SOVIET/EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. YEDRASHNIKOV SAID THAT THE NAME OF THE NEXT SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT WAS STILL UNKNOWN. HE FELT THAT MOSCOW WAS NOW WAITING FORTHCOMING EGYPTIAN CABINET CHANGE BEFORE MAKING FINAL DECISION. HE STATED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING MAKING THEROUNDS THAT HAFEZ ISMAIL MIGHT BE NAMED AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW FOLLOWING THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT'S REORGANIZATION; IF THIS WERE TO OCCUR, MOSCOW

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WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO RECIPROCATATE BY ASSIGNING A HIGH LEVEL ENVOY TO CAIRO RATHER THAN A RELATIVELY LOW-RANKING CAREER DIPLOMAT. YEDRASHNIKOV ADDED THAT ISMAIL WOULD PROBABLY BE WELL-RECEIVED BY SOVIETS WERE HE TO BE APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW.

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